

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUE, D. D.

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## THE ABUSE OF FREE WILL

"At that time Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper and invited many. And he sent his servant, at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began to refuse to come. (Luke xiv, 15-16.)"

How often man abuses his free will. It was given to him to use principally in the service of the Lord; and it never was intended to be used in a way that would not ultimately redound to God's glory. But man, in many instances, uses it for far different purposes. The Gospel of this Sunday clearly shows how much we can abuse this free will of ours, and if not sin thereby, at least neglect opportunities that perhaps never will come to us again.

When the supper spoken of—by which Christ intended to typify the kingdom of heaven—was ready, the invited guests were told to come. Immediately they made excuses. The result was that others were called in to take their places. These former invited ones went their way, occupied with different worldly affairs, and seemed not to heed the great blessing they were allowed to slip by.

It is the same today with so many people of the world. God invites them to great and holy things, but they heed not His invitation and go their way, wrapped up in secular pleasures and occupations. These invitations of God are destined, if they had freely responded to them, to fit them more and more for the great banquet in God's heavenly kingdom, after their worldly pilgrimage. God will not force them to accept these invitations; or to respond to these aspirations; but, possessed as they are of free will, He wishes them freely to accept what He suggests. They but often abuse their free will, by rejecting the favors intended for them by their Maker; and, like the invited guests of today's Gospel, they devote themselves to something else. This substitute for God's banquet may not be sinful in many cases, but even where it is not, that which is gained by performing it is nothing compared to the merit they would have earned by following out God's wishes.

It is no surprise to the faithful pastor in God's Church that so many of his people, apparently good and pious, do not make progress in the spiritual life. The same faults they were guilty of years ago they commit today; the sacraments are not frequented by them any more than they were formerly; no greater interest is taken in church affairs now than was taken when, perhaps, the Church was needed less to meet the spiritual needs of her children. But this is not all. We see some who do not even practise their religion, as they did some years ago. It is very difficult, in fact practically impossible, to remain at a standstill in religion for any great length of time. To gain heaven we must perfect ourselves on earth. We are not fit for heaven unless we do this. Now, those who do not carry on this perfecting process are not doing God's will; and whoever fails to do God's will soon retrogrades in spiritual things. Hence it is that great numbers in many parishes have fallen from their former height in religion.

This loss of fervor is often noted not so much in the backsliders themselves as in their children; and from the conduct of the children we are almost always justified in concluding regarding the present action of their parents. How often pastors will note a lack of respect for themselves in the children of those who once gave the priest the deference rightly due him; again, a proper respect for the Church and sacred things is wanting. But the change is noted especially in regard to their conduct in the world. Practically no restraint is put upon the child; it catches the spirit of liberty that floats over this land, and, too often, regardless of right and wrong, propriety and impropriety, the child is swayed by it. It is true that times are changed, and very often parents are heard to say that they wish their children to enjoy more liberty and freedom than was given to themselves. This is, no doubt, a good thought; but they must not forget that unbribeled children will make sensual men and women later on. And a child is to be trained not for this world alone, but first of all for God. The spirit of the world and the spirit of God are in a state of conflict; and it should appear evident to any parent that, where the child is given complete worldly freedom, the spirit of God will not find a resting place in its soul. Parents should not be deceived nor carried away by a false worldly way of thinking in these matters. They ever should be conscious of God's eternal command to train their children God-fearingly, and they should realize that the man of God is the best citizen, and the one most respected by the worthy part of humanity.

It is necessary, particularly at the present age of the world's existence, that people listen to and heed God's invitation. Things that distract from God and religion are more numerous than they were in days gone by; and but too easily will the person, not particularly cautious, become blind to the need

of increasing in religious fervor. And if there be no increase in spirituality among Christians, this world will soon become a place where little true piety exists. The history of many countries testifies to the truth of this assertion. It shows us how for years the people of certain countries had made little or no spiritual progress; thus offering an opportunity to the spirits of darkness, who were not slow to avail themselves of it. Biding their time, they prepared for an attack; and at the most opportune moment struck their blow, and religion was deeply wounded. People who had been at a standstill during a great part of their lives easily fell victims to the enemy and joined his forces. The innocent suffered also; but it was all due to the negligence of their fellow-countrymen. The Church then must enter again and evangelize anew these fallen nations, but the work will not be as rapid nor as complete as before, for error has been rooted deeply; and many will tenaciously cling to it.

Catholics should answer every invitation, no matter how silent, from God. These invitations come to us in different ways; sometimes directly from God; sometimes through attendance at the Church's different devotions; sometimes through the pastor's words. Let us endeavour not to neglect any opportunity of being present in the church during the different services and let us try in every other way to receive God's sacred messages, and to carry them out faithfully and minutely.

## THE FEAR OF DEATH

There is an old saying, attributed to many authors, that the Catholic religion may not be an easy religion to live in, but is a good religion to die in. Bishop Vaughan in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record demonstrates the truth of the second half of this saying by interesting examples drawn from his own observation and from the history of Catholic deathbeds. To see how some great Catholics have faced the adventure of death is one of the best arguments for the truth of our holy religion, and a source of consolation to all mortals who must one day pass into their eternity.

Death is a punishment justly inflicted by God on man on account of sin. Therefore it is but natural that man should stand in some fear of it. But it has been remarked as one of the merces vouchsafed by our Heavenly Father, that this fear which persists as long as a man is in health, generally disappears when death actually approaches.

Cardinal Manning's explanation of this phenomenon is this. "So long as God intends a man to live, He instills into him the fear of death; when He intends him to die, He carefully withdraws this fear, so that most people at the very last deliver up their souls into the hands of God as peacefully and as calmly as a healthy child composes himself to sleep."

St. Teresa found that it was harder to suffer than to die. Indeed St. Teresa like St. Paul and other saints in whom the love of God had grown so strong that they longed to be dissolved and to be with Him, had a fear of life rather than a fear of death.

"When Cardinal Wiseman was on his deathbed," writes Bishop Vaughan, "he is reported to have said that he had no misgivings, but felt full of joy, 'like a schoolboy going home.' The great theologian Suarez during life had an almost abnormal fear of death, yet when it was actually on him, he smiled, as he exclaimed, 'I little thought how sweet a thing it is to die.'"

A few years ago a holy religious was dying and one of his companions after he had given him Extreme Unction asked him if he were not terrified at the thought of meeting our Divine Lord. "What," he exclaimed, "afraid to meet Him Whom I have served and labored for, during the past forty years, and Who has charity itself? Certainly not; I would be much more afraid to meet the Provincial."

Death may be regarded from two points of view, as a punishment of original sin or as the especially appointed means of attaining our sublime destiny. Considered from the first point of view it is only natural that we should fear death and dread its approach, but from the second we should look forward to it as to our friend and deliverer. A holy man once wrote that "although it be in anyone's power to deprive thee of life, yet nobody not even the uncontrollable violence of kings can deprive thee of death."

"To the soul in grace," concludes Bishop Vaughan's consoling reflections, "free from all attachment to sin, what is death but the flinging open of his prison gates, the breaking down of all earthly barriers, and the setting of the captive free? What indeed is death but the sweet voice of the Bridegroom, inviting His spouse, the redeemed and glorified soul, to the heavenly nuptials. When the cold sweat of death bedews the brow, and the last moments approach, and the ear grows insensible to all earthly sounds, it will open to the silvery echoes reaching it from another Land; and the departing soul will cry out in the hidden depths of its being: 'Behold, my Beloved speaketh to me: Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. Winter (the winter of sin and of all spiritual bleakness and barrenness) is now past; the rain (the rain of trial and tribulation

and temptation) is over and gone; and the flowers (flowers of virtue and holiness) have appeared in the land. My beloved to me, and I to Him, who feedeth among the lilies.' Who would wish to tarry a moment longer in the cold, dreary, dismal land of exile, when once the entrancing voice of the Beloved is heard calling him away to the inexpressible delights of Heaven, and to the nuptials of the Lamb. Surely in an ecstasy of joy he will cry out: 'I have found Him Whom my soul loveth, I hold Him and I will not let Him go.'"—The Pilot.

## CATHOLIC WOMEN TO COUNSEL MODIFICATION OF FASHIONS IN DRESS

Rome.—The banning of certain crude dances, the boycotting of motion pictures, and theatrical productions that fail to observe certain standards, and the inauguration of a campaign for more modest dress were among the suggestions made at the International Congress of Catholic Women's Leagues, held here last week. Cardinal Merry del Val presided at the first meeting.

Fashions in women's attire were discussed at length at the conference and it was decided that inasmuch as Paris is a world fashion center, a committee of members drawn from the highest society in that city would be formed with instructions to watch the evolution of fashions and urge modifications in consonance with the ideals of Christian womanhood. This committee will communicate with member branches throughout the world whenever concerted action is necessary.

Certain dances said to have originated in America were severely criticized at the session which recommended a return to classical national forms.

The Holy Father celebrated Mass at the opening of the Congress.

## THE CAUSE OF CRIME AND CRIME WAVES

How to stop the crime wave is just now a favorite subject of popular discussion. Remedies innumerable have been proposed ranging from the drastic to the absurd. All have this saving grace that they are well intentioned, but most have the same vital defect, that they fail to touch the real root of the evil. They are palliatives rather than cures.

Years ago Pope Leo XIII. said a wise thing about crime and its remedy. It deserves wide publicity at the present time. Speaking of the evils existing in his day, which were similar to the evils of the present day, the Holy Pontiff declared with the brilliance and force that characterized all his utterances, "they who strive by the enforcement of law to extinguish the ever growing flame of popular passions, strive indeed for what is right and just; but they will labor with little or no result so long as they obstinately reject the power of the Gospel and refuse the assistance of the Church. These evils can be cured only by a change of principles, and by returning in public and private conduct to Jesus Christ and to a Christian rule of life."

The Christian rule of life rests upon authority. Whether the modern world likes it or not, this truth must be faced. The flouting of authority is the root from which spring crime and crime waves. And the beginning of rebellion against authority, the great plague of modern social life, goes back three centuries, when the so-called reformers substituted the principle of private judgment for authority in religion.

Since then, age succeeded age, and generation followed generation, each discarding bit by bit the vesture of authority, with which all human life should be clothed, until today, it is but a thing of shreds and patches. Individualism waxed strong and powerful, and popularized the fallacy that the individual is a law unto himself, responsible to no God and to no master. Consequently today the State, the family, and society are struggling against the current to hold above the submerging tide of individual caprice the standard of obedience to lawfully constituted authority.

It is imperatively necessary for mankind to abide by the laws and ordinances of duly constituted authority. But how to make men realize and act upon this truth is the question for eradicators of crime waves to consider. Will it be by preserving the fiction of individualism popularized by the sixteenth century, or will it be, as Pope Leo has pointed out, by a change of principles and a return to a Christian rule of life?

The Catholic Church teaches that authority comes from God. Authority, as its name implies, is that which is possessed by an "author" or creator. God is the author of the universe, and possesses authority. Parents are authors of their children and possess authority, the civil power derives its authority from God, the author of all. To despise legitimate authority in whomsoever it may be vested is to oppose the Divine will.

"Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" says St. Paul, "and they who resist purchase to themselves damnation." The obstinacy of mind that will not

brook any authority however lawful is becoming more and more a modern attribute among the younger members of society. To what else can we attribute this than to the rejection of religious instruction, the blotting out of the name of God from education, the irreligious and soul withering atmosphere in which so many young people spend their early and most impressionable years.

There is something radically wrong in a society that produces such fruits as a crime wave. Men have seen it, and they have not been slow to read the handwriting on the wall. Will they imitate the ostrich and bury their heads in the sand until disaster overtakes them, or will they take the advice of such a sapient observer and wise physician of social evils as Pope Leo XIII. and apply his remedy, change their principles and return to Jesus and to a Christian rule of life.—The Pilot.

## AN AUSTRIAN GIFT TO CHICAGO PRELATE

## PRECIOUS MANUSCRIPT GIVEN ARCHBISHOP MUNDELEIN

By Dr. Frederick Funder

As a token of the gratitude which Austrian Catholics feel for the assistance they and their press have received from Most Rev. George W. Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago, the Vienna Catholic Press Association, Herold, is to send him a valuable historical document—an original letter of St. Charles Borromeo, the great archbishop of Milan.

The letter is dated November 18, 1596, and is signed by the great Saint himself and bears his seal.

Archbishop Mundelein was the leader in the work of gathering some \$150,000 in cash and about \$75,000 worth of food and clothing for the relief of the starving people of Central Europe in 1920 and 1921. A generous share of this material assistance went to Austria.

The Saint's letter was addressed to Cardinal Pallotto. It contains a confirmation of the receipt of the synodal regulations then lately issued, together with a report of the inspection made in the diocese of the Saint on the Swiss frontier.

It is to be noted that during the lifetime of St. Charles Borromeo the ecclesiastical synods had been re-established, and formed the chief means of a revival of the Church, especially through the support given by the great Saint.

OBTAINED IN ITALY

This letter, of great importance from the viewpoint of ecclesiastical history, has not previously been published, and now appears in print for the first time. It was obtained in Italy by the Vienna municipality during the life of Dr. Karl Lueger. It was presented to this great leader of the Austrian Catholics, and at the time Mayor of Vienna, as a memento of his patron saint.

The following inscription appears on the front page of the document: "To the Most Illustrious and Most Venerable, my worthy friend, the Lord Cardinal Pallotto." Then follows a short summary of the contents written in Italian. The English translation of the letter is the following:

Most Illustrious and Right Reverend, Highly Esteemed Sir: Together with the letter of Your Most Illustrious Magnificence, dated the twenty-third of last month, I have received your synodal stipulations, which I found great pleasure in reading, and I was fully satisfied by the same. I should like to know regarding them whether Your Most Illustrious Magnificence has obtained the votes of the Synods or whether they have been issued by himself and of his own accord.

I agree that all material requirements qualified as being indispensable in every church. It is quite good thus. Having the intention of making up a similar list, I shall use yours, not only to save time but also for the sake of greater security. By imitating the form which is a result of your wisdom and experience, more chance exists that it will be adopted. For all this I offer my thanks to Your Most Illustrious Magnificence, requesting you also to send me those two newly published writings about the celebration of Mass, though they may not be your own work.

I have returned from my tour of inspection, lasting two months, through those parts which seemed to be most in need of it; that is, in the mountainous districts towards Graubunden. Thank God, I am perfectly satisfied on account of the piety which becomes manifest among the people, in spite of the fact that their neighbors are heretics. I now shall supervise the Provincial Synod and inspect the parishes, making arrangements for holding the Synod of the Diocese.

Upon this I humbly send my respects to Your Most Illustrious Magnificence.

Your Most Illustrious and Right Reverend Most Devoted Servant,  
C. CARDINAL BORROMEO.  
Milan, November 18, 1596.

CARDINAL PIFFI'S LETTER

The last words, "Most Devoted Servant," and the name are in the Saint's own handwriting. The remainder was written by his secretary.

as by a number of distinguished Catholic personages of Austria, such as Senator Dr. Klenboeck and Monsignor Seipel, the chairman of the Christian-Social party of the Austrian National Council.

Cardinal Piffi is head of the Herold which publishes the Reichspost and other large Catholic daily newspapers of Austria.

50,000 FRANCS GIVEN BY POPE TO FRENCH CHURCH RESTORATION

Cardinal Luçon, Archbishop of Rheims, having reported to the Holy Father the success of the loan for the reconstruction of the French churches, has received from the Cardinal Secretary of State a letter from which the following important passages are quoted:

"Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI. has read with lively satisfaction the letter in which Your Eminence had the filial thought of informing Him of the very opportune and laudable initiative of the Bishops of Northern France in order to raise the funds necessary for the reconstruction and restoration of the devastated or ruined churches in their dioceses.

"It was particularly agreeable to His Holiness, and comforting to His paternal heart, to learn of the generous haste with which the sons of France, always so devoted to great and noble causes, answered the appeal of their Bishops and covered a first loan of two hundred million francs destined for this great undertaking.

"The success of the loan, Your Eminence has justly said, proves the sympathy inspired in France by the cause of the devastated churches, and the interest which the country has always felt in the Holy House which is the center of souls, the home of spiritual life and the dwelling-place of God among men."

With the letter came a gift of 50,000 francs sent by the Pope for the devastated churches.

## THE VALUE OF WIT

Wit gives to life one of its best flavors; common sense leads to immediate action, and gives society its daily motion; large and comprehensive views its annual rotation; ridicule chastises folly and imprudence, and keeps men in their proper sphere; subtlety seizes hold of the fine threads of truth; analogy darts away in the most sublime discoveries; feeling paints all the exquisite passions of man's soul, and rewards him by a thousand inward visitations for the sorrows that come from without.—Sidney Smith.

It is wisdom to say little concerning the injuries you have received. We are generally losers in the end if we stop to refute all the backbiting and gossiping we may hear by the way. They are annoying it is true, but not dangerous, so long as we do not stop to expostulate and scold.



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